

Nature's Methane reaffirms commitment to Louisville

Aug 13, 2015, 10:13pm EDT Updated Aug 13, 2015, 10:26pm EDT

INDUSTRIES & TAGS | **FOOD**, BIOTECH, ENERGY INC.



Carol Brandon
Timmons
Editor
Louisville Business
First



Nature's Methane LLC remains committed to establishing operations in Louisville even though plans for it to be part of the West Louisville Food Port were canceled, [as Louisville Business First reported](#).

The company issued a statement Thursday evening reaffirming its plans to open facilities here.



Nature's Methane [is pursuing plans for a biofuel facility](#) about two miles from the food port site. The company said it would be working with [Heaven Hill Distilleries Inc.](#), which would send production waste to Nature's Methane for reprocessing into biofuel.

Heaven Hill has operations adjacent to Nature's Methane's site, located between 15th and 17th streets and Breckinridge and Maple streets.

[Larry Kass](#), director of trade operations for Heaven Hill, said in the release that the company is pleased with the environmental benefits that would be achieved by sending its production waste to Nature's Methane's facility.

"We were very interested when we were approached by Nature's Methane to participate in a program that would drastically reduce the amount of spent grain that is hauled away each day by trucks or put into the MSD (sewer) system," Kass said in the release. "The proposed bio-digesters at the 17th Street facility will allow Heaven Hill to directly pipe over our stillage to be naturally and safely processed, reducing truck traffic and lessening the burden on the city's infrastructure and potential environmental impact."

Nature's Methane, a subsidiary of Markle, Ind.-based Star Distributed Energy LLC, said in its statement that it has a potential relationship with GE Power and Water to buy technology that would be used at its Louisville facility.

GE's Monsal line of advanced anaerobic digestion systems "safely and effectively convert" various organic materials and food products, including scraps from commercial processing facilities, into renewable natural gas, the company's news release said.

"Our Monsal anaerobic digestion systems are a reliable way to convert organic waste into biogas," said Yuvbir Singh, general manager, engineered systems – water and process technologies for GE Power & Water.

"Anaerobic digesters have successfully coexisted in both rural and urban communities for many years, providing great value," Steve Estes, CEO of Nature's Methane, said in the release. "As cities continue to grow, and increased demands are put on resources, more and more communities will be looking to anaerobic digesters as the solution."

He added that Nature's Methane seeks to be a leader in the realm of renewable energy in Louisville.

"We will continue to work with the city, community leaders, residents and businesses to understand how we can work together," Estes said.

Louisville Metro officials expressed support for Nature's Methane's plans.

"These projects have the potential to help Louisville achieve many of its goals to become more sustainable," said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer in the company's release. "I am pleased that Nature's Methane will continue to meet with community members to provide education and listen to concerns, and am confident as people learn the facts about this process, that they will become more comfortable with these facilities. The digesters will add green jobs to our economy, and safely create clean, renewable energy."

Keith Hackett, Louisville Metro's director of Solid Waste Management Services, said in the release that "biodigesters offer a tested, safe technology for turning food waste into clean energy."

"With Louisville's significant food and beverage job sector," Hackett added, "there is a need to continue to explore opportunities like biodigesters, which provide green energy and green jobs. Louisville already has two working biodigesters with the need for more."

Work on Nature's Methane's proposed West Louisville Food Port facility was supposed to begin this fall. The anaerobic digestion plant the company planned would have converted food waste to natural gas.

However, many West Louisville residents opposed having the biofuel facility as part of the food port. They expressed concerns that it would be unsightly and emit odor.

As a result, Seed Capital Kentucky, a nonprofit organization that leads the 24-acre food port project, submitted a revised development plan to Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government officials that showed the biofuel facility was removed from its plans.

Nature's Methane had planned to spend about \$35 million to build the facility, which would marked the start of construction in the food port, located in the Russell neighborhood.